



**Item 1**

**JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
September 26, 2018**

**The Joint Sustainability Committee convened in a regular meeting on September 26, 2018 at City Hall in Austin, Texas.**

**Chair Jim Walker called the Board Meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Chair Jim Walker, Vice Chair Kaiba White, Holt Lackey, Francoise Luca, Michael Osborne, Fisayo Fadelu, James Shieh, Katie Coyne, Nhat Ho, Karen Magid, Joep Meijer

**Board Members Absent:**

Patricia Seeger (alternate – Shieh present), Adrienne Haschke (alternate – Magid present), Kelly Davis

**City Staff in Attendance:**

Zach Baumer, Cavan Merski

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Michael Osborne moved approval of the August 22 minutes with an amendment, Joep Meijer second.

**2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL**

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Discussion regarding the emissions from residential natural gas and electric heating equipment, in relation to the City of Austin Energy Code (Discussion and/or possible action)**

Zach Baumer / Cavan Merski:

- Current City of Austin Energy Code encourages the usage of natural gas for residential water heating where available.
- Council Adopted a target of net zero GHG emissions by 2050, this means near ZERO usage of gasoline, diesel, natural gas, and coal
- Technology lock-in is a form of economic path dependence whereby the market selects a technological standard and because of network effects the market gets locked-in or stuck with that standard even though market participants may be better off with an alternative.
- In the past, using electricity for heating air and water emitted more carbon and was more expensive than using natural gas. Due to Austin Energy’s shift to renewable energy and efficiency advances in heat pumps, this is all changing.

- Over a 15 year lifetime, a code compliant all-electric new single family home using Austin Energy electricity will create less GHG emissions than the comparable home with natural gas space and water heating equipment.
- Over a 15 year lifetime, a code compliant all-electric new single family home can have lower equipment plus utility costs than the comparable home using natural gas and electricity.
- Factors not included in this analysis:
  - Local equipment costs
  - Gas / electric connection infrastructure costs
  - Additional scenarios including different size homes and higher electricity usage
  - Retrofitting existing buildings
  - Multi-family and commercial buildings and construction trends

James Shieh: Three things that we need to consider when talking about electrification are:

- Can AE handle the demand increase and spikes?
- How much would we need to upgrade our electrical service to accommodate this change?
- Solar hot water heating could help ease the load increase

Zach Baumer: We haven't studied these issues in depth, but we would need to if we go further

Kaiba White: The reason for this presentation was to specifically explore the requirement in the energy code to require connections to adjacent gas infrastructure in new construction.

Larry Graham (Texas Gas Service Representative): We're talking about possibly changing the energy code (not the building code). My understanding is that the RMC chose not to offer a recommendation on when or if the Development Services Dept. should or shouldn't change this. This affects water heating and rarely affects single family development but does impact multifamily developments more often.

Kaiba White: The RMC chose not to offer a recommendation because DSD wasn't sure if they we're going to do a code rewrite this cycle because CodeNEXT was going to occupy a good amount of their resources.

Joep Meijer: I think this shows a trend in the market that fuel switching can help us reach our emissions targets. This presentation can inform us in our update process because the implications are broader than just one line in the energy code.

Nhat Ho: Normalizing cost down to the energy unit is helpful. The water / wastewater committee requires certain developments to tie in to reclaimed water which is a similar issue to this and we've had similar issues to the ones James mentioned.

Jim Walker: We have a request to staff by next month to find out if the 2018 Energy Code review is moving forward and after that is determined we can move forward with a possible recommendation or resolution

### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Update on the Austin Community Climate Plan from the Climate Program Manager (Discussion and/or possible action)

Zach Baumer:

We could update and improve the Climate Plan to address:

- Areas where we aren't making progress
- Gaps that weren't covered in the first plan
- New focus areas that have emerged over time
- 

Things that have changed since the last plan was written in 2015:

#### The Big Picture

- We now have active state and federal opposition
- Climate change is being measured in real time, we're already at 1°C and rising

#### Local Context

- Austin continues to grow at a rapid rate
- Affordability and Equity are now more front and center than ever
- Transportation is the issue – Congestion, air quality, climate change, cost of living, convenience

#### Technology and Economics

- Renewable Energy prices have dropped dramatically and Austin Energy has advanced plans to 65% renewables, 90% carbon free power by 2027
- Electric Vehicle technology, options, and adoption are advancing quickly
- Cap Metro plans are moving forward, but Connections 2025 is still in question
- Fossil fuels are still very cheap

Possible Modifications include:

Modification	Example
Expand Scope	Include Scope 3 emissions (air travel, food, construction materials, purchased goods)
Shift Perspective	Focus on equity and affordability
Sector Focus	Transportation
Align Efforts	Public Health, Ecosystems, Resilience, and Air Quality
Results Focus	Less aspiration, more implementation

#### Staff Proposed Process

- Form a JSC Working Group
  - Benchmark with other cities
  - Do some stakeholder outreach
  - Address scope, boundary, timeline, sectors, perspective

– Come back to the full committee with some Recommendations and Options

- JSC recommends a way forward
- Council and/or Manager agrees on the path forward
- Staff begins work in 2019

Katie Coyne: There's a lot of overlap in the possible changes and they're not mutually exclusive.

Michael Osborne: Where do you personally think we need to improve on?

Zach Baumer: The items in the presentation are reflections of where I think we can improve

Nhat Ho: We've learned a lesson in the affordability bond. That bond dollar number was low and city staff said they didn't have the resources to implement a higher amount and we should be having a similar discussion with this revision. What are we able to do and right size the plan and actions? One way to look at affordability is looking at how much money certain carbon reductions will cost and decide if we can afford to pay that. We also need to consider additionality and not just reducing the carbon intensity of our energy sources.

Joep Meijer: We should make the committee broader than just 1-3 JSC members. We could include a few community to join this group to make it more collaborative. It is great to discuss the scope and parameters of the plan and revisit why we decided on what we did last time. With changes in temperatures and technology we need to look at the targets we made and possibly create sector targets. We can also engage council to create more accountability for departments to hit specific carbon reduction targets.

James Shieh: Implementation vs. aspiration is an important consideration. Breaking down the plan into pieces it becomes more manageable and people can envision accomplishing certain parts.

Katie Coyne: I agree we need implementation at a neighborhood or small area plan scale. The plan can be a toolkit and framework for how we accomplish things at this scale. Functional green creates a minimum standard for metrics and let's sub systems operate under that standard. Perhaps we can pull in someone from equity or the Joint Inclusion Committee.

Kaiba White: All the climate conversation should be in the context of affordability. Scope 3 emissions are also critical to include in the climate plan.

Fisayo Fadelo: How can we make this relatable to the rest of the community? How do we use a vocabulary to reach all people in the community? If we're going to get stakeholders involved we need to use the right language to reach them.

Katie Coyne: It's also important to consider how the new ACM's and their roles will affect our plan.

Jim Walker: We will aim at a special called meeting of the JSC to scope this. Perhaps a half day, perhaps a Saturday. We will make progress on this plan before the October meeting and have momentum before the end of the year.

Joep Meijer: We should brainstorm what stakeholders we want to be involved at this stage.

Katie Coyne: Can we make a formal invitation to participate to the Joint Inclusion Committee?

Nhat Ho: Can we look into meeting at a venue more conducive to collaboration?

**a. Commission members report back on any relevant discussions from their respective boards and commissions (Discussion and/or possible action)**

Katie Coyne: Camelback PUD has passed the Parks and Environmental boards with conditions. Part of the reason it passed Environmental Commission was because it dedicates 60 acres of permanent open space and 26 acres of park land, has dark sky lighting, Austin Energy Green Business certification and number of green infrastructure components to the site.

Fisayo Fadelo: CDC got a presentation about the Colony Park sustainability community project and the developer has been selected. Along the lines of implementation we had earlier this is an opportunity to have some say in how we impact development.

James Shieh: Planning commission heard a case that dealt with the reflectivity of glass which highlighted the need for sustainability projects to consider climate impact as a whole to avoid simply shifting impacts.

Karen Magid: The Food and Climate presentation's reception by the Health Human and Services Committee is a harbinger of the feedback we'll get from other parts of the climate plan and we need to consider this when rewriting our plan.

Nhat Ho: Water and Wastewater had a presentation on land that is managed by the city for water quality purposes and they are looking forward to a new generation of land banking.

**5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Capital Metro and Strategic Mobility Plan
- Water Forward in October
- Integration of climate goals into Long Term Parks Plan
- Healthy Parks Plan (Nov – Jan)
- Equity report

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m. without objection (Osborne first, Coyne second).

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For more information on the Joint Sustainability Committee, please contact Zach Baumer ([Zach.Baumer@austintexas.gov](mailto:Zach.Baumer@austintexas.gov) or 512-974-2836).